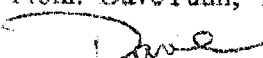


To: Chairman Butcher
Vice Chairs Lambert and Windy Boy, and all Committee Members

From: Dave Pauli, Montana Animal Care Association Legislative Committee Chair
 Western state Humane Society Regional Director. 698-1167

Subj: Two Bills before you today: HB 720 and HB 726

Date: 2/19/06 (Emailed / and faxed to those without email) 444-4825

Mr. Chairman, and esteemed Agriculture Committee Members. I am Dave Pauli of Billings, Montana and have been involved in the animal care and control profession for 26 years including five years as the Superintendent of Animal Control for the Billings Police Department.

You probably have already been hearing impassioned pleas from animal care and control professionals and rescue groups and I would like to give my overview both as the Chair of the MACA committee and as a representative of the 26,000 Montana Humane Society members.

First, the two bills are proffered by citizen groups from around the state who have noted the negative effects on increased Internet sales of dogs/cats/non-human animals, and the extreme rise of both "good and bad" rescue groups and sanctuaries.

The need for minimum standards, inspections and quality control to the Montana "Companion Animal and Pet" market has long been talked about -- but -- the issues and horrific situations around the state have brought the issue to a near crisis level. Each of the past few years my office has been requested to assist in animal hoarder, "puppy mill" or bad rescue cases. But the truly negative issue is that these cases used to involve collections of 50-100 animals and they now include collections from 200-700 hundred. (In 2006 we dealt with over six cases in excess of 300 animals.) Animal Care, Law Enforcement and the general public need your help in ensuring that 1) the citizens that purchase a puppy/kitten/pocket pet will get a healthy one, 2) that while these animals are in the care of any animal care facility they meet at least minimum animal husbandry standards, and 3) that unique but growing cases of the compulsive disorder of Animal Hoarding can be addressed and 4) That the human and public health issues surround disaster response preclude that pet and animal issues are fully addressed in the Montana Codes, State Plan and Animal Annexes.

Please now allow specific comment on the two bills:



FAX: 406-444-4825

To: Dee Barfknecht

Ag Committee

For 2/20/07 3 p.m. Hearing

Thank you for ensuring the
committee gets this.

Dave
Dave Pauli, (c) 698-1167

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HB 720: This bill addresses two Key problems in no minimum standards and in no minimal consumer protection for people purchasing dogs.

It should however be amended to include cats and other animals generally purchased as family pets or companion animals. There are many facilities breeding dogs, cats, rodents, reptiles, birds, bobcats and other species completely for the pet trade and these enterprises have no mandated standards (unless they are conducting wholesale sales or other controlled USDA activities)

HB 726: This bill also addresses two key issues involving "pets in disasters" and defining and addressing animal hoarders (which are a growing problem that is perplexing law enforcement and prosecutors).

I have been involved with MT DES and will defer to them as to which portions of HB 726 might be duplicative of the good job they have done in ensuring that MT is in Compliance with the Federal PETS ACT mandate: But this section does contain some excellent requirements for county planning and meeting other federal mandates for service dogs and disabled humans.

The Hoarder component and especially section (5) (a) (i); (ii); (iii); and (iv); are critical to helping Law Enforcement, Social Services, and Montana's Prosecutors and Judges to be able to address this latest growing type of animal cruelty. The animal numbers (i) fits perfectly with other existing MT code.

In summary: There is a huge problem in Montana where cities, counties and non-profits are being faced with. In 2006 my office expended close to \$20,000 of the long term pre-trial care of ten animals in an effort to help a MT county of a jam. This timely and costly process would have been unnecessary if this hoarder wording had been in effect in early 2006. I am certain you will hear from many other agencies and officials that these issues are real problems that need some attention in this session.

Thank you for this opportunity for input and for your consideration to help Montana's animal care agencies and retail animal sales.

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